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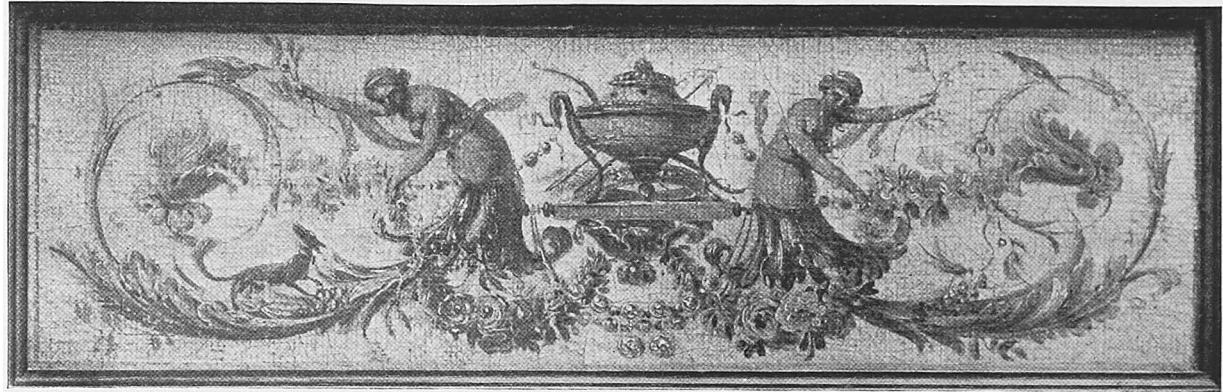
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INTRODUCTION

FOllowing up the success achieved by the portrait collection in the December issue of this magazine, THE LOTUS presents a series of beautiful interiors and several outside views of old English mansions and of garden scenes.

Of the interiors several are from paintings by Walter Gay, others from the old English prints of Joseph Nash, while two are the work of Mr. C. J. Charles. The gardens were painted by Miss Mary Helen Carlisle.

Henri Lavedan, writing of the Walter Gay interiors, says that the artist has understood that inanimate things, and especially those which, owing to their great age, have more memories, are possessed of a little soul of their own, of whose furtive fluttering he tries to give us a glimpse. These rooms seem especially painted for their deco-

rations because they are always without human figures. And yet we almost invariably know by whom they are inhabited. These deserted rooms never give the slightest impression of being abandoned. We sit as it were in an empty room and have every opportunity to study, without disturbance from anyone, its decoration. Yet we feel the presence of someone near by. Who has just gone out? Who is just coming in? Who raised the half-open window?

French XVIII century art! What visions it evokes of grace and charm coupled with certain obvious frivolities that do not mar its creations, because they are carried out with touch so light and dexterous. Under the hand of the French XVIII century artist even the trivial became important—because it was so to its creator. One can imagine no moment more serious to a Watteau, a Boucher, a Fragonard, than that in which he applied the last touch of airy grace to one of his fêtes galantes.

Five hundred drawings signed by the leading French decoratists of the period represented—including several by Watteau and Boucher—form the Decloux collection in the Cooper Union Museum. It is from this collection that come the *Salon de Danse*, by Jean Charles Delafosse, and Moucheron's decoration for the stairway of the Château d'Albermarle, at Voorst.

To give an idea of the antiquity of old English estates and mansions, it is only necessary to state that the moat garden at Penshurst, or at least the moat itself, may have been just where it is now at the time of William the Conqueror, who landed in England in 1066. Such antiquity staggers the imagination of an American to whom a house a hundred years old seems venerable and a Washington's headquarters ancient.

Like Penshurst, Cranbourne, from which the Salisbury family derives its second title, Viscount Cranbourne, dates back to the early English Gothic but later on it was thickly ornamented in the style of the Italian renaissance as affected in England. The picture of Cranbourne shows an Italian porch put on to an old English home, and offers one of those early mixtures of styles that has so often been copied or adapted in this country.

"Montacute is a sweetly retired neighborhood; the voice of the cuckoo may still be heard here." Thus ends an account of this structure, which is in Somersetshire, some four miles from Yeovil, and one of the grandest specimens of the architecture of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the ground plan being in the form of the letter E, a frequent conceit in those days and sup-

posed to have been intended as a mark of respect to the Queen.

Above the door, in the porch, is an inscription, in ancient letters, and couched in the generous spirit of old English hospitality:

"And yours, my friends."

Over the door, on the eastern side, is inscribed the couplet:

"Through this wide op'ning gate
None come too early, none return too late."

With the development of country life in the United States the tendency is to build mansions approaching in size those of the old titled families of Europe. As a result, spacious interiors of the olden time can be studied with profit, not necessarily with a view to being copied with exactness but to their adaptability to modern conditions and individual taste.

The fire-place should always be a beautiful feature of a large interior; and in its decoration it may be made to form a link between the original family that gathered about it and the mansion itself. The coat-of-arms for example, would lend itself to a decorative compartment above the mantel and thus be a reminder of its founder.

In some of the fine old English interiors the tradition preserved in the decoration of the huge fire-places is even more intimate. The chimney-piece in the drawing-room at Speke, Lancashire, has for its theme three generations of the Norris family. The center compartment is supposed to represent Sir Edward Norris with his two wives. The sons and daughters are shown in the compartment below.

Titles, usually followed by brief descriptions, will be found on the pages opposite the pictures.